

Economic Development

Vision: The West Seattle Junction business district as a safe, attractive and inviting commercial district that supports a balance of retail and professional jobs, daytime and evening activities, and provides quality goods and services that meet the everyday needs of the community,

As one of its initial tasks, the Economic Development Committee formulated the vision statement above for the business community that summarizes the ideals and principles on which the following goals, policies and objectives are based. The Economic Development component of the West Seattle Junction neighborhood plan translates these ideals into a set of actions that can be implemented by the community, City and other participants to realize the vision,

Fundamental to the business district vision is creating a vibrant, compact commercial district that provides the small town atmosphere and qualities that the community desires. The following general goals have been identified.

Goal 1: Create a more compact mixed-use commercial core located between 41st and 44th Avenues SW from SW Genesee Street to SW Edmunds Street.

Goal 2: Promote attractive, higher density mixed-use development within the commercial core.

Goal 3: Encourage development of mixed-use properties with office and/or residential units above ground floor business/retail units in the commercial core,

Goal 4: Undertake streetscape and building façade improvements along California Avenue SW between S W Genesee and S W Edmunds Streets.

Goal 5: Develop design guidelines on California Avenue to reinforce pedestrian orientation and to enhance the small town character of the area,

Goal 6: Encourage more mid-block pedestrian connections that link public parking lots and businesses along California Avenue SW as new or re-development of properties occurs,

Goal 7: Create a community gateway with landscaping, improved crosswalks and a sign or landmark element at Fauntleroy Way S W and 35th Avenue S W.

Goal 8: Support home-based businesses,

Goal 9: Encourage a sense of community pride through business promotions, advertising and community events.

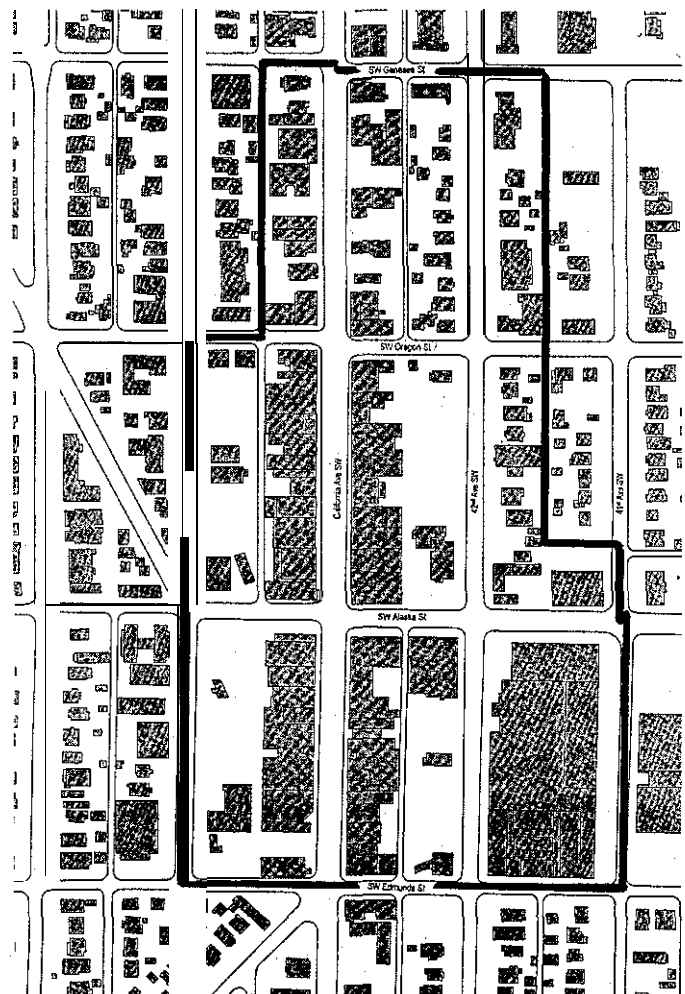
Goal 10: Encourage the provision of parking for both shoppers and employees,

The general strategy for achieving the business community's vision focuses on attracting both public and private investment, particularly through design guide changes, strong business retention and recruitment, traffic flow and pedestrian safety improvements, parking improvements, and streetscape and building façade improvements necessary to create a more attractive development setting. The following goals, policies and recommendations address these issues

Business Retention and Recruitment

A major objective of business retention and recruitment is to provide a supportive environment in which existing businesses can prosper and to which new businesses will be attracted. Many in the community see the character of commercial development along California Avenue SW as declining. The perception is that there is an increasingly narrow mix of retail goods and services, and that merchants are not providing what the community is looking for. Of particular and repeated concern—is the lack of anchor tenants or magnet stores. The quality of the retail environment is also an issue of concern.

The primary business retention and recruitment recommendations are focused on building a strong, collaborative effort among the FOJ, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Junction BIA and merchants for marketing, promotion and special events. This includes utilizing existing programs to conduct outreach to merchants on marketing and promotion, financial issues and other business operation concerns. Other recommendations are focused on improving the physical environment to make the Junction a more attractive place to do business and shop (see the building and streetscape improvements). Efforts will be focused on identifying what goods and services local residents and merchants want in the Junction and actively recruiting businesses that provide those goods and services. One goal of the recruitment recommendations is to establish a more diverse mix of retail and professional services within the commercial core,



Commercial Core

Goal: Promote attractive, higher density mixed-use development within the commercial core.

Goal: Encourage development of mixed-use properties with office and/or residential units above ground floor **business/retail** units in the commercial core.

Goal: Support outreach to property owners to determine areas of common interest between their goals for their properties and the community's vision and goals for the business district.

Goal: Support home-based businesses.

Goal: Encourage a sense of community pride through business promotions, advertising and community events.

Policy: Provide a clean, safe and more intense, pedestrian-oriented environment that draws residents and visitors,

Policy: Actively work to promote area businesses as well as attract new businesses that provide goods and/or services desired by the community,

Recommendation: Use business district customer survey (see Mainstreet Program recommendation below) to identify local home-based businesses, A more detailed follow-up survey or other in-depth examination of this business group should follow to determine local business needs, Work with West Seattle Chamber, Junction BIA, FOJ and local merchants to promote recognition of home-based businesses,

Recommendation: Develop basic marketing packet that includes map, demographic, articles and newsletters. Add professional graphics and broader business base to marketing efforts over time, Undertake further analysis of specific uses of marketing packet to determine prospective businesses, their space requirements, building and tenant improvements, and parking requirements to determine feasibility of attracting these prospective businesses.

Recommendation: Use Mainstreet Program tools to develop a consumer survey to determine what goods and services West Seattle residents want, and to provide workshop on business recruiting.

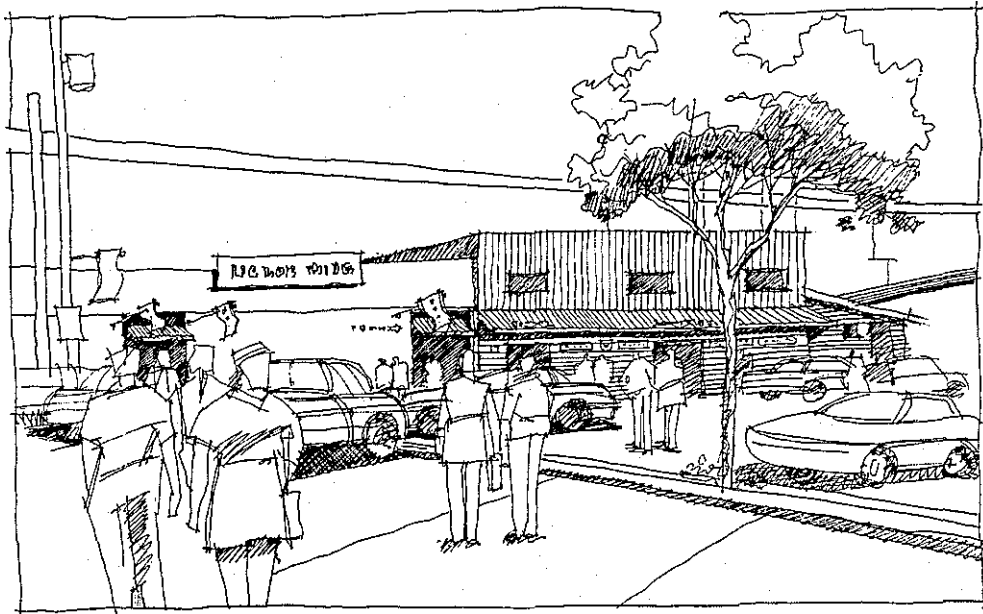
Recommendation: Promote greater balance of day- and nighttime activities including exploring with merchants the feasibility of extending evening hours.

Recommendation: Establish opportunities with area merchants for joint advertising in conjunction with summer festivals and activities and as kick-off for "late nights in the Junction".

Recommendation: Encourage FOJ, BIA and Chamber of Commerce to jointly promote business awards, which recognize local businesses that are outstanding performers and support the community.

Recommendation: Work with the Chamber of Commerce and BIA to get greater participation in area events, including advertising by Junction merchants and special promotions,

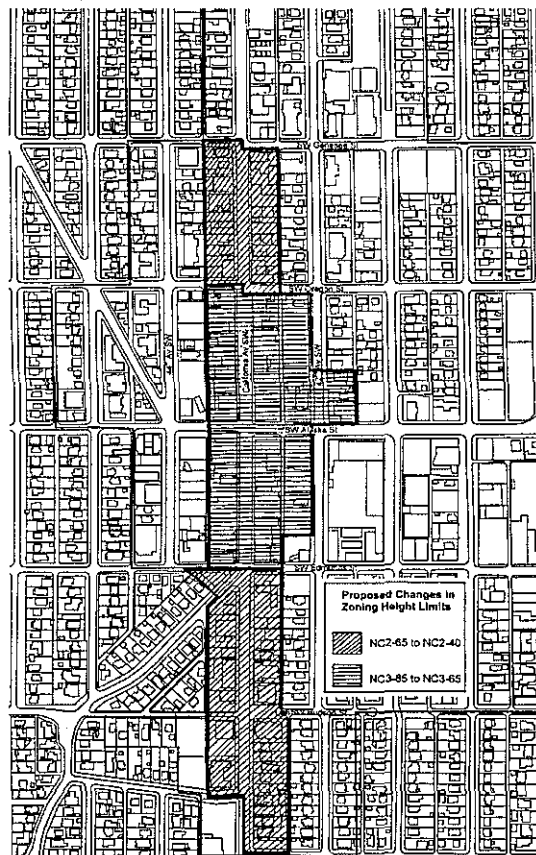
Recommendation: Develop a “special events” transit service to link activities such as the West Seattle Street Fair and High Point Multi-cultural events throughout West Seattle.



Zoning and Design Guidelines to Support the Business Core

The area along California Avenue SW from SW Genesee to SW Edmunds Streets between 41st and 44th Avenues SW comprises the commercial core of the Junction business district. Today, the area consists predominantly of one-story commercial buildings. While this area contains the primary concentration of retail uses in the Junction, commercial uses are scattered the length of California Avenue SW from the Admiral District to Morgan Junction as well as on east-west arterials in neighborhood commercial zones. The community feels that the linear pattern of commercial development along California Avenue SW (and along east-west arterials) from the Admiral District to Morgan Junction has drawn and continues to draw economic vitality and pedestrian traffic away from the commercial core area. This linear pattern of development is largely a result of zoning requirements for ground-floor commercial uses in Neighborhood

Commercial zones. Developers in the area also note that the requirement for ground-floor commercial space doesn't pencil out for the most part, and that it is difficult, once built, to get tenants. Consequently, the business district recommendations include eliminating or relaxing the requirement for ground-floor commercial uses in neighborhood commercial zones outside the commercial core area.



The changes in Zoning Height Limits proposed in the Draft Plan are not included in the Final Plan,

Throughout the neighborhood planning process, the community has stressed its desire to maintain the small town atmosphere and qualities that have historically characterized the West Seattle Junction. A pervading quality of this small town "feel" is expressed in the existing architecture of the community. One way to preserve the small town quality in the future is through building design, including height and architectural style. As a result of community input in Phase II committee meetings and outreach efforts, the draft plan business district recommendations initially focused on reducing the allowable height within the commercial core area from 85-feet to 65-feet, eliminating/relaxing the requirement for ground floor commercial uses outside the core, and developing design guidelines. The recommended height reduction would not have significantly reduced employment or residential capacity (approximately 250 fewer jobs and 100 fewer housing units) and would have been

more consistent with the Hub Urban Village designation as detailed in the city's comprehensive plan and reflected in zoning designations in other Seattle neighborhood commercial districts. Although this proposal received the most support from community respondents during Phase II

outreach efforts, the support did not constitute a community consensus among all the major stakeholders so it was eliminated from the plan in favor of an alternative recommendation,

The alternative recommendation leaves unchanged the current NC3 85-foot zoning within the core area (an area of approximately 3-blocks) and focuses on eliminating/relaxing the requirement for ground floor commercial outside the commercial core and developing design guidelines for both new development and redevelopment of properties outside the commercial core area. No change in employment or residential capacity would occur under this alternative. This recommendation reflects the desires of many Junction commercial property owners, particularly representatives of West Seattle Trusteed Properties, and their view that structured parking and new commercial development /economic revitalization will not occur if building heights are restricted to 85-feet. This recommendation also is favored by the West Seattle Chamber of Commerce and by the Junction BIA.

There are a number of tradeoffs associated with the height limitation alternatives. As noted previously, small parcel size may make it difficult to accommodate parking on-site with new development and multiple property ownership may make parcel assembly difficult. The presence of environmental constraints may make below-grade parking unfeasible in some areas. However, the Junction commercial core is located in a designated pedestrian zone which allows for reductions in parking requirements and for shared or joint-use parking which could address these types of issues. Also, there are a number of parcels (many contiguous) in single ownership that represent good development potential. Development at 85-feet could accommodate greater employment and residential density, but would likely generate more traffic and parking impacts, as well as visual/aesthetic impacts. These could be mitigated to some extent through application of design guidelines. There is no evidence to support claims that development at either 65-feet or at 85-feet is financially unfeasible. Specific site constraints, building design and market conditions, among other factors, will determine the financial success of future development. In general, an 85-foot building will have higher per square foot costs because of existing building code requirements for reinforced concrete construction, and other design issues (including pressurized elevators, ventilation requirements, sprinklers, etc.). No pro forma analysis has been prepared for either scenario.

Because of its location and visibility as the commercial center of the Junction, the community feels that high design quality is particularly important in this area. To enhance pedestrian orientation and architectural variety, design guidelines will be developed to include modulation, canopies, signage, lighting and other design elements consistent with the Junction's historic architectural style and with the community's desire for a small town atmosphere. The design folio is the first step in this process.

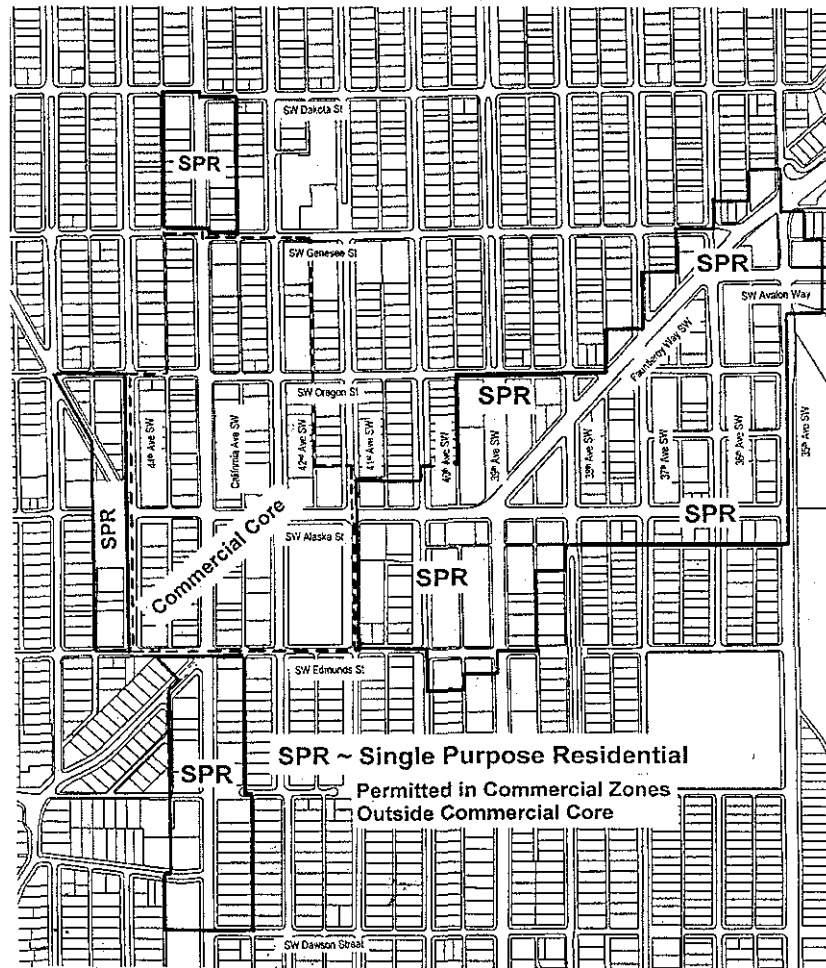
Goal: Create a more compact mixed-use commercial core located between 41st and 44th Avenues SW from SW Genesee Street to SW Edmunds Street,

Policy: Encourage a mix of community supported businesses, including locally-owned and operated businesses as well as smaller, local or regional chain stores

Policy: Encourage ground level commercial spaces in the Neighborhood Commercial zones within the commercial core area.

Recommendation: With representatives of Friends of the Junction, The West Seattle Merchants Association (BIA), the Chamber of Commerce and West Seattle Trusteed Properties, work to develop specific design guidelines for both existing and new buildings and streetscape based on *Preparing Your Own Design Guidelines - A Handbook for Seattle's Neighborhoods* and input from the Department of Design, Construction and Land Use (DCLU). (See discussion of Design Guidelines in Land Use Section).

Recommendation: In appropriate commercially zoned areas outside the commercial core, allow single-purpose residential as an outright permitted use and/or open space to fulfill commercial requirement,



Traffic Flow and Pedestrian Safety to and within the Business Core

Recognizing that California Avenue SW serves not only as the main access route into, out of, and within the commercial area, but also is part of the main north-south arterial routes serving West Seattle, a comprehensive set of access and circulation policies and recommendations were developed for the Junction commercial area. Traffic and travel speeds have been identified by the community as important neighborhood concerns. In particular, traffic along California Avenue may discourage pedestrian uses and actually detract from the success of retail businesses. Visibility for some stores may be a problem due to traffic flow. Some type of traffic calming or other strategy to slow traffic has been suggested, particularly in the area between SW Edmunds Street and SW Oregon Street. Other strategies include creating a gateway to the business district with improved

pedestrian and vehicular connections; pedestrian safety improvements, such as crosswalks, curb bulbs and curb extensions; street and public space lighting improvements; lane configurations and improved signal coordination and improved bicycle connections and facilities. (See Transportation Section) connections

Access to the Junction commercial core from Fauntleroy Way SW and from residential areas east of Fauntleroy for pedestrians, and to some extent vehicular traffic as well, is hampered by heavy traffic volumes and high speeds as well as inadequate and unattractive pedestrian facilities. The prohibited left turn from northbound Fauntleroy Way onto SW Alaska Street also limits access to the commercial area – particularly motorists unfamiliar with the area, like ferry users, who do not know to use California Avenue SW or SW Edmunds Street instead of SW Alaska Street,

Goal: Undertake street, sidewalk and building façade improvements along California Avenue SW between SW Genesee and SW Edmunds Streets.

Policy: Improve safety and convenience of pedestrian access and circulation within and to/from the Junction commercial area,

Policy: Maintain smooth traffic operations along California Avenue SW through the commercial area.

Recommendation: Develop a program to repair, replace and widen existing sidewalks in the business district. Phase in as new development occurs.

Recommendation: Study the best methods of improving traffic flow through the commercial core. The study should analyze such means as lane re-configurations, improved signal coordination, removal of the existing “scramble” light, and/or other measures identified in the city’s “Streets that Work” program,

Recommendation: Provide curb bulbs, curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands and improved crosswalk design along California Avenue SW and Fauntleroy Way SW.

Recommendation: Encourage the City of Seattle, Historic Seattle, FOJ, Junction BIA and West Seattle Chamber of Commerce to identify local “landmarks” and develop a pool of resources for façade improvements,

Goal: Encourage more mid-block pedestrian connections that link public parking lots and businesses along California Avenue SW as new development or redevelopment occurs.



Recommendation: identify and develop new pedestrian connections at various locations along California Avenue SW to provide access to public parking and to promote pedestrian circulation throughout the district. The areas are envisioned as plazas with retail space, cafe seating and other pedestrian amenities. Connections are also encouraged in conjunction with redevelopment and/or new construction projects

Recommendation: Work with landowners and the community to improve the existing breezeway with signage, art, lighting and other amenities.

Goal: Create a community gateway with landscaping, improved crosswalks and a sign or landmark element at Fauntleroy Way SW and 35th Avenue SW.

Policy: Improve pedestrian and vehicular access to the commercial area, particularly to/from Fauntleroy Way SW.

Recommendation: Develop an Avalon Way-Fauntleroy Way-Alaska Street pedestrian corridor from 35th Avenue SW to California Avenue SW to facilitate safe and convenient pedestrian circulation. Improve sidewalks, crosswalks, street lighting and traffic signals. Provide benches, trees and other pedestrian amenities.

Parking

Repeatedly, parking has been noted as an issue within the community. There is general consensus among merchants that existing public parking lots are not well marked and many shoppers do not know about them. With the exception of on-street parking, parking lots are typically located in areas nonvisible to or from shoppers destinations. Priority has been given to

better communicating existing parking lots through signage and/or a parking map. Longer-term recommendations will be coordinated with West Seattle Trusteed Properties,

On-street employee parking has been identified as a top priority. Currently, parking lots provided by West Seattle Trusteed Properties and funded through merchant fees are for customers only. Employees must park on the street (not in front of businesses). Increasingly, employees must park in neighboring residential areas. This sometimes causes conflicts with residents. The recommendation is to examine existing parking arrangements to find ways to accommodate employee parking, such as shared use of facilities. It is anticipated that the Friends of the Junction, Junction BIA, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce and West Seattle Trusteed Properties will work with area employers and City staff to develop appropriate solutions,

Goal: Encourage the provision of parking for both shoppers and employees.

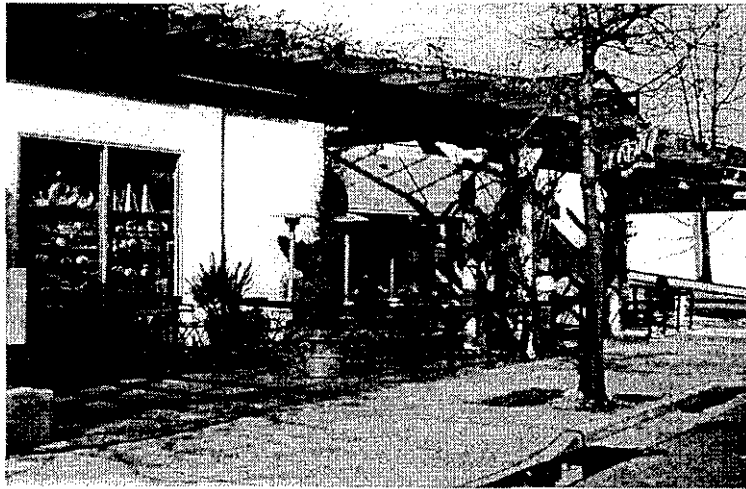
Recommendation: Better communicate existing parking options. This could include, for example, signage and/or a parking map to be distributed by merchants.

Recommendation: Coordinate employee parking issues and needs with West Seattle Trusteed Properties, Junction BIA, West Seattle Chamber and local merchants. Examine existing parking arrangements to find ways to accommodate employer and employee concerns. This could include shared use of existing parking facilities and future development of a joint-use parking facility as new development warrants,

Building and Streetscape Improvements

Today, the Junction commercial core consists predominantly of one-story commercial buildings constructed prior to 1940, with the earliest constructed in 1910 and the most recent in 1970. The median year built is 1929. Most of the older buildings underwent extensive façade changes in the 1950's and 1970's. Two notable exceptions are the Campbell Building (built in 1929) and the Harem Building (built in 1925). The unattractiveness of many of the buildings, poor upkeep, and lack of basic cleanliness (from sidewalks to trash collection to restrooms) fosters many residents' perceptions of a rundown and unsuccessful business district. The legacy of deferred maintenance for both public and private spaces and facilities contributes to this perception. Frequently, buildings have entranceways off the alley, where parking is located. The rear entrances of many buildings in the Junction are dirty, littered and lack any amenities (adequate lighting, signage, etc.).

There are also some very "visible" and long time vacancies in the heart of the Junction that contribute to the perception of a rundown and unsuccessful business district. These include the US Bank Building at the southeast corner of California Avenue SW and SW Alaska Street, the vacant lot located on the northwest corner of SW Alaska Street and 42nd Avenue SW, and the several vacant buildings on the northeast corner of the same intersection,



Outdoor seating and plantings can help increase street activity and the vitality of the business district.

There have been a number of successes that the community would like to build upon and use as models for the future. Some are just small improvements that made big impressions. The Soap Box recently moved into the space at 4529 California Avenue SW (formerly Helium Roses). The business owners cleaned and repainted the exterior façade and renovated the interior space. Curious Kidstuff (formerly Murray's), a store selling non-violent toys, music, arts and crafts,

opened at 4740 California Avenue SW in May, 1998. The store owners removed

sheets of old corrugated iron that covered the original 1928 façade and upper windows. They cleaned up the exterior and totally revamped the interior – which hadn't been touched in almost 30-years. Jack Menashe, owner of Menashe and Sons Jewelers, "undid" a 1950's exterior on his 1928 building and restored the clock to its original splendor. Tom Henry, owner of JF Henry which sells fine china and housewares, also "undid" an earlier exterior remodeling effort and uncovered banks of windows in the process,

The community sees this area as a vibrant retail shopping district. Because of its central location and high visibility, merchants feel that buildings and streetscapes, including alleys, should be upgraded. Street furnishings, such as kiosks, banners and benches would be provided to inform, communicate and attract. Where appropriate, alleys would be improved to provide better pedestrian access and circulation throughout the commercial area. Improvements could include lighting and landscaping, removal of exposed garbage dumpsters, and utilizing open space requirements at the rear of buildings. Working with the arts community, these interesting and inviting outdoor and streetscape spaces would provide settings for business, art and community activities. New street lighting, canopies and awnings consistent with the Junction's historic past would be reinstalled. Sidewalks would be replaced as new development occurs,

People need an interesting environment for walking. Store display windows provide this interest and serve as an important marketing tool for businesses at street level. The interaction between inside and outside activities also adds an important element of safety to the community. The business community feels that this interaction is important to the vitality of the West Seattle Junction neighborhood as well as critical to maintaining the relationship of interior and exterior uses at street level. Their goal is to avoid the "closed-off" look of Washington Mutual Network Services. Where some privacy is wanted, recommendations include etching the lower portions of windows, installing art glass (not mirrored glass), or some other way of allowing for the necessary interaction without disrupting business people.

Goal: Develop design guidelines on California Avenue to reinforce pedestrian orientation and enhance the **small town character** of the area.

Policy: Streets, buildings and public spaces should be designed to a human scale to promote pedestrian access and safety, and should be well lighted and clean,

Policy: Commercial buildings should have inviting store fronts instead of blank walls or open lots,

Policy: The streetscape should be pedestrian friendly through the use of landscaping, lighting, art, and street furniture,

Policy: Encourage more trees, flowers and green spaces in the business district to enhance the pedestrian atmosphere and general appearance,

Policy: Encourage public art in the commercial core.



Recommendation: With representatives of Friends of the Junction, The West Seattle Merchants Association (BIA), the Chamber of Commerce and West Seattle Trusteed Properties, work to develop specific design guidelines for both existing and new buildings and streetscape based on Preparing your own Design Guidelines - A Handbook for Seattle's Neighborhoods and input from DCLU, FOJ and community.. Complete within one year of plan adoption, (See discussion of Design Guidelines in Land Use Section)

Recommendation: implement already identified areas for lighting improvements. Working with FOJ, Seattle City Light, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce, and Junction BIA, identify additional areas for improvement and coordinate light standard replacement with street and sidewalk improvements, Priority areas for increased lighting in the near future include:

- . 37th Ave SW
- . 45 Ave SW
- Parking lots between California and 42nd SW
- . 37th St between Myrtle and Willow and alley to east
- . Alleys between 44th and 45th and Genesee and Dakota

Recommendation: Provide benches in locations throughout the business district, Key areas include the Senior Center, Town Hall and future playhouse on California Avenue SW areas proposed for public art installation; the vacant area at 42nd and SW Alaska; the triangle between the Feed and Seed and furniture store on California Avenue SW; the passageway between California Avenue SW and the public parking lot in the rear to the west; and in the vicinity of new green spaces such as former City Light substations (California, Dawson and Dakota),

Recommendation: Provide bike racks in locations throughout the business district. Work with merchants and local school children to identify appropriate locations. Key areas include bus stops and public parking lots.

Recommendation: Work with FOJ, Junction BIA, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce, merchants, and West Seattle Trusteed Properties to support planting and upkeep of green spaces.

Recommendation: Work with ArtsWest, FOJ, Junction BIA, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce, merchants, and West Seattle Trusteed Properties to identify potential locations for public art in the business district. Identify local artists and seek their input and participation, Identify funding sources for initial projects and incorporate others as new development occurs. Install public art in the following locations:

- The vacant area at 42nd and SW Alaska
- The triangle between Feed and Seed and furniture store on California Avenue SW
- Passageway between California Avenue SW and parking lot.

Business District Implementation Activities

The above recommendations identify implementation activities designed to achieve the vision embodied in the business district's goals and objectives. These activities are specific actions to be taken by the community, the city or in partnership, and include a range of regulatory changes and capital improvements as well as merchant-sponsored activities. Some items generally may be implemented through existing city programs and/or community organizations within the next 3.5 years while other items may require further analysis to determine feasibility, policy implications, technical considerations or funding sources. The priority and time frame for these recommendations are identified in the Approval and Adoption Matrix that accompanies this plan.